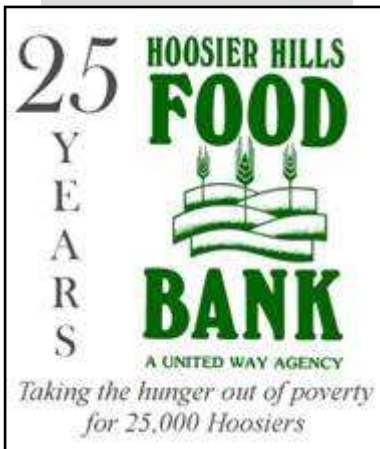


Locally Grown News

Published by the Local Growers Guild of southern and central Indiana



Hoosier Hills Food Bank Starts Gleaning Program

The LGG works hard to educate the public about the benefits of eating local, fresh, whole foods. Unfortunately, there are many people in our communities for whom fresh, local foods are still a luxury.

The Hoosier Hills Food Bank (HHFB) in Bloomington, Indiana collects, stores, and distributes nutritious food products to non-profit organizations, which provide free feeding programs that serve both ill and needy families and individuals in Central Indiana. Since our first year (1982), HHFB has grown from distributing 400 pounds of non-perishable foods to distributing over **two million pounds** of non-perishables, dairy, bread, meat, produce, and rescued meals from local restaurants, cafeterias and catering companies.

For many years, HHFB has received local, fresh produce by participating at the Bloomington Farmer's Market on Morton Street. With the help last season of our committed food banker, Casey Steury, who works at the Farmer's Market every Saturday, our intake of produce tripled (from 5,700 to 16,700 pounds)! Additionally, we participate in the Plant-a-Row (PAR) program, in which anyone

from the beginner gardener to the expert farmer can "plant an extra row" of fruits or vegetables to donate to the Food Bank.

As our partnership with the Farmer's Market and PAR prove to be highly successful for the Food Bank, we are looking for ways to continue to strengthen our relationships with local growers as a means to obtain more produce that is fresh and local. Beginning this spring, we hope to work directly with area growers to obtain even more of their excess produce.

We are willing to work with each farm based on their specific needs, such as picking up already harvested "second-picked" boxes of produce not fit for the market, helping to harvest crops that have ripened too early for the next market day, or gleaning larger farms' fields post-harvest. We can provide volunteers and food bank staff to pick up, help harvest, or glean the fields. If you are a farmer interested in developing a relationship with HHFB by donating tax deductible produce, herbs or pasture products (i.e. meats, eggs, etc), please contact Kim Kanney at volunteer@hhfoodbank.org or 812-334-8374. Thank you!

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Board of Directors

- President – Teresa Birtles, Heartland Family Farm
- Vice President – Grant Pershing, Fullcircle Farm
- Treasurer – Bobbi Boos
- Secretary – Ellen Michels, Bloomingfoods
- Winter Market Rep. – Katie Zukof, Community Member
- At Large – J.D. Grove, Fullcircle Farm
- At Large – Jennie Hoene, Ewenique Icelandic Sheep
- At Large – John Galuska, Rastazumska Production
- At Large – Linda Chapman, Harvest Moon Flower Farm

Thank you for voting!
Board meetings are the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30PM.

Homegrown Indiana Farm Tour – July 13th

The LGG, the City of Bloomington Parks Department, Slow Food Bloomington, and Bloomingfoods are working together to organize a farm tour this summer featuring Gypsy Ridge Farm (Ervin Stoll), the Lost River Co-op, and Sun Circle Farm (Anthony Blondin).

The goal is to get consumers excited about local food, give them a chance to see different farms in action, and feed them a tasty local food dinner at the Lazy Black Bear (prepared by Chef Alan Simmerman from Bloomingfoods and Chef Rags from Nick's English Hut.)

Local growers Bruce McAlister and Linda Chapman played a major role in organizing the sponsors and hope to expand the idea in future years to include more farms and offer more tours. Let us know if you'd like to be part of the action!

Is There a Good Side to Higher Food Prices? by Bruce Lilly

Food prices in the U.S. are rising faster than they have in many years. An Associated Press story earlier this month quotes the USDA in saying that food prices rose 4 percent in 2007, which is a significant contrast with the average rise per year for the previous fifteen years of only 2.5 percent. And right now, the expectation is that prices will rise even faster in 2008.

A broad statistic about “food prices” obviously hides a great deal of complex details. To begin with, the USDA figures are based on prices at grocery stores, not farmers’ markets. Plus, an overall figure is a composite of many individual items, and some of those have risen much faster. For example, the USDA says that eggs cost 25 percent more in February of 2008 than they did one year earlier. The increase for milk and dairy products was 13 percent, and poultry went up 7 percent.

The bad side of higher food prices is plain to see. No one is eager to spend more money on food, and many people simply cannot afford it. But is there any good side to the higher prices at the grocery store? Are there implications for local growers?

One immediate possibility is that, for some products, such as eggs, there will be a smaller gap between the store price and the higher price charged by farmers at the popular markets. Having a more competitive price without lowering your price is a development any seller would welcome, so that alone sounds good, but higher food prices may have broader consequences that bring about even more important changes.

How the price of gas is affecting food policy

There are many different factors that contribute to the cost of food, but one of the most obvious is the price of gas.

Fuel prices are putting the pinch on small farmers and corporate agribusiness alike. For several years, proponents of the local food movement have been stressing the negative consequences to the environment of burning the fossil fuels needed to transport food long distances, and now it is becoming much more expensive to do so. As the cost of fuel rises, there are some signs that the people in charge of food policy are taking notice.

The *New York Times* reports in an article from early April that “both state and federal governments have begun to encourage institutional buyers like school districts to consider geography and not just price when seeking bids on food contracts.” Legislation recently passed in Washington state is a perfect example. The new law not only removes the requirement that school cafeterias accept the lowest bid, it also budgets \$600,000 annually to create a “locally grown fruit and vegetable snack program” in those elementary schools that have a high percentage of low-income students.

A bill soon to be signed into law in Maryland will start a “Maryland Homegrown” week in school cafeterias. Officials with the state’s Department of Agriculture will work to connect schools with local growers around the state. The law also encourages schools to help children learn more about local agriculture through field trips to local farms.

The emphasis on local agriculture

If Indiana passed a similar law, would it affect local growers in this area? There is no clear answer to that question now, but the goal of these changes is to promote local agriculture overall. If schools have more options for buying local food, local growers gain another market for selling their products.

The reasons to support in-state farmers clearly go beyond the price of gas and the threat of global warming. People can see that there are economic benefits for the community that come from helping local growers flourish. More and more often, people are asking why the lunch plates at local schools are serving produce that has been transported from hundreds of miles away, instead of the produce that is being grown just a few miles away.

The movement toward local, organically grown food is changing the way many Americans eat, and it is also changing the way agricultural policy is shaped. There is more awareness that the immediate price is not the only consideration when you buy an apple, a bag of greens, a dozen eggs, or a block of cheese. At the same time, that immediate price cannot be ignored, and as standard food prices increase, the products from local growers are looking better and better.

Bruce Lilly is a freelance writer in Bloomington and avid locavore.

In political news, **Steve Bonney** is running for governor as an independent candidate. He is the founder of Sustainable Earth, a non-profit organization that supports small, family farms and runs the Small Farm Conference every year. (This year it was the Food and Energy Conference). Steve is a great supporter of local food and local farmers. He is working to collect 50,000 signatures by the end of June to be on the ballot in November. Visit his website – bonneyforgov.com – for more information.

Upcoming Events

BLOOMINGTON COMMUNITY

FARMERS' MARKET

BLOOMINGTON – SHOWERS PLAZA
SATURDAYS, APRIL 5 – NOVEMBER 29
9:00AM-12:00 NOON

BLOOMINGTON – 6TH AND MADISON
TUESDAYS, JUNE 3 – SEPTEMBER 30
4:00PM-7:00PM

LGG BOARD MEETING (MAY)

BLOOMINGTON – CALDWELL CENTER
MAY 12, 7:30PM-9:30PM

Please RSVP to Maggie at 812-345-1592 in case the date/time changes.

FARM OPEN HOUSE (MAY)

SPENCER – HARVEST MOON FLOWER FARM
SUNDAYS IN MAY, 12:00-5:00PM

Please visit the website
www.harvestmoonflowerfarm.com for
directions and details or call Linda
Chapman at 812-829-3517.

MARKETING WORKSHOP – HOW TO SPREAD THE WORD

DANVILLE – HENDRICKS COUNTY
GOVERNMENT CENTER
JUNE 3, 8:30AM-12:30PM, \$20

This workshop is geared towards organizations seeking to market their work using the internet, displays at events, and written materials like brochures and flyers. Contact Hoosier Heartland RC&D at 317-290-3250 to register.

LGG BOARD MEETING (JUNE)

BLOOMINGTON – CALDWELL CENTER
JUNE 9, 7:30PM-9:30PM

Please RSVP to Maggie at 812-345-1592 in case the date/time changes.

HOMEOWN INDIANA FARM TOUR

BLOOMINGTON DEPARTURE
JULY 13TH, DAY TRIP, \$25

Enjoy a bus tour to visit Gypsy Ridge Farm, Sun Circle Farm, Lost River Co-op, and dinner at the Lazy Black Bear. Details coming soon.

Local Growers' Guide

The 2008 Local Growers' Guide is out!! We will be delivering copies to members either at the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market or through the mail within the next few weeks. We will be selling the booklets for \$2 this year and the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department has agreed to sell them on our behalf at the summer market. The booklets will also be sold at Bloomingfoods and hopefully several of our other retailer members. If you are interested in selling copies from your farmers' market stand or farm store, please let us know!

How to Serve Local Farmers at Every Level

The new LGG Board of Directors has met twice so far, in April and in May, and is busy updating our strategic plan for the Guild. Our mission is "educating, supporting and connecting local growers, consumers, business and community in southern Indiana." It's a wonderful mission but the question remains... how?

There are a lot of great options available and so the Board has been working to identify top priorities and some possible paths toward each goal. Along the way, there has been a very interesting discussion about how to serve growers who have very different styles and needs.

One way to categorize growers is by the markets they are targeting.

- Selling from the farm (often with some level of agri-tourism)
- Selling at farmers' markets (counting on the market customers to buy products)
- Selling through CSAs (products are "presold" to subscribers)
- Selling to small restaurants or groceries (often on a contract basis where products are grown for specific retailer)
- Wholesale sales to distributors or larger retailers (generally larger quantities, often done on contract basis)

These are all valid ways to raise and sell food, each with their own advantages and limits. However, they also require different support and resources. Someone selling off their farm probably won't be

interested in a distribution system while someone selling wholesale probably won't be interested in promoting their farm to tourists.

So how can the LGG help all farmers without spreading itself too thin? For now, the answer appears to be focusing on some tools that can help everyone – better communication between growers, business planning support, identifying new markets, building consumer awareness of local food, staying on top of major political issues related to food. We will also continue to connect growers with a wide variety of educational opportunities and respond to the needs of individual growers. Please make your voice heard!

Classifieds

EQUIPMENT	LAND	BULK PURCHASING	ANNOUNCEMENTS
<p>Reach-in compressor cooler – 14' x 11'; two feet deep; four doors; price negotiable. Call Paul Sacman 812-988-6268.</p>	<p>May Creek Farm, ten miles south of Bloomington, has 2-5 acres of certifiable organic land they would like to lease for organic crops. Please contact Dave Parsons at 812-824-6875.</p>	<p>Jeff Evard is now a Fertrell dealer and is willing to deliver ½-pallette orders. Call 765-528-2887.</p>	<p>RedBarn Jamboree in Nashville will continue its farmers market Fridays 12-5 and Saturdays 8-5. Want to vend? Call 812-988-2429.</p>
<p>Red Dragon Backpack Flame Weeder includes torch, backpack frame, 3 gallon fuel cylinder and squeeze valve. Used twice, perfect condition. 200.00 Linda Chapman 812.829.3517 or chapdale@bluemarble.net</p>	<p>FARM LABOR</p>	<p>Jason Gavriile wants to coordinate bulk buying of natural fertilizer products from AgGrand. www.altrumonline.com. Specific technical questions about this product can be directed to Walt Sandbeck at 715-392-7101 ext. 6419; he is the sole mixer of this product. Walt will also read your soil data. Jason can be reached at 812-865-3353.</p>	<p>Classified ads are free to members (please limit to 3 per newsletter) and \$5 for non-members with a 30-word maximum. Entries can be sent by e-mail to localgrowers@localgrowers.org or contact Maggie Sullivan by phone at 812-345-1592 by June 10th.</p>
<p>Black plastic stackable bulb crates - \$2/each, will deliver to Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market. Call Steve Spencer at 317-727-2730.</p>	<p>IU Grad Student looking for a farm within a half hour of Bloomington willing to trade housing for labor. Call Michael 314-591-0131</p> <p>Terica, an incoming IU student, seeks opportunities for paid or subsistence work in sustainable agriculture. Need land for RV. Open learner, eager for nature. 765-419-9014</p>		

About This Newsletter and Our Organization...

This newsletter is a publication of the Local Growers Guild, a cooperative of growers in southern Indiana dedicated to promoting local food, and is mailed to our members six times a year. Our mission is to educate, support, and connect local growers, consumers, businesses, and communities.

We run a variety of projects including publication of a "Local Growers Guide" annually, sponsorship of "Dine Local Night" events, coordination of the Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market, and development of the Bloomington incubator kitchen project.

We have three categories of membership – grower, retailer, and community member.

For additional information, please check out our website or feel free to contact us at 812-345-1592 or localgrowers@localgrowers.org.

LOCAL GROWERS GUILD

P.O. Box 2553
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www.localgrowers.org

